

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 128

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## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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STATE BOARD OF CHARITY, STATE HOUSE,  
BOSTON, Jan. 7, 1914.

HON. FRANK J. DONAHUE, *Secretary of the Commonwealth.*

DEAR SIR: — In accordance with the provisions of chapter 452 of the Acts of 1910, I have the honor to submit herewith drafts of eight proposed bills embodying legislation recommended by the State Board of Charity for enactment by the incoming legislature, together with a statement comprising that part of the annual report of the State Board, which contains the recommendations for legislative action embodied in the said bills as follows: —

1. The establishment of an additional institution for the care of persons who have been legally declared to be feeble-minded, but who, because of the lack of facilities for their proper custody and treatment, still remain in the community and in institutions not suited to their care.

The existing institutions for the care of feeble-minded persons are filled to the limit of their capacity, and the waiting list of persons adjudged feeble-minded is greatly in excess of one thousand. Enlargement of the Wrentham State School, now being completed, can take care of but a small fraction of those persons who for lack of segregation are a menace in the community, in that they are a fruitful source of illegitimacy, prostitution, crime, and the perpetuation of mental defect. Much that the Commonwealth and its local communities are now doing to relieve distress and to safeguard public health and morals, is done as a direct result of

their own failure to cut off the causes of such ills by segregating the persons who constitute the source.

This Board therefore concurs with the State Board of Insanity in recommending the immediate establishment of an additional State school for the segregation and care of feeble-minded persons, such institution to be administered after the manner of existing schools, and to fall under the supervision of the State Board of Insanity.

2. The Board has constantly in its care hundreds of children, each one of whom is for days, weeks, or perhaps months in need of hospital treatment. Such children are for the time being incapable of placement in homes. They require treatment in some institution until their health is such that they may be sent out into the community. With a total of 5,500 children in the Board's custody, this margin of cases requiring hospital care is constant and may be expected to increase six or seven per cent. each year, in exact proportion to the normal increase in the total number of wards. Some of these are feeble-minded, and would be cared for properly should the recommendation of the State Board of Insanity and of this Board, in regard to more care for the feeble-minded, meet with favor; but a large number must still remain. Yet the Board has no hospital in which to treat these children. Some, falling sick in their foster homes, are cared for by private hospitals at State expense. Most are sent to the State Infirmary, the only hospital to which the Board can send them. Here they are out of place, and tend to hamper the infirmary in its more legitimate activities. At the same time, they lose the benefit of special care and treatment, so frequently demanded by the miserable condition in which they are found by the authorities and in which they remain at the time of commitment to the Board's custody.

In view of these considerations, the Board recommends the establishment of a children's hospital, in some place other than Tewksbury, for the temporary care and treatment of State minor wards too ill to be cared for in foster homes.

3. The Board recommends the creation of a separate board of trustees to administer Penikese Hospital, retaining only the supervision in this Board.

Though the State Board of Charity has always believed that lepers should be cared for on the main land where nearness of friends and relatives would soften the sadness of exile, and where the outlay of public money would be much less, it has nevertheless maintained and developed the hospital located on the Island of Penikese in response to public feeling, so that, should the dispensary building asked for this year be granted, this institution would rank with the most efficient leprosaria in the world. And this work will be cheerfully continued, should the Legislature consider that the wiser course. This recommendation of a separate administrative Board is made solely in the belief that the administration of State institutions and their supervision should in all cases be placed in separate bodies, and that the duties of a board primarily supervisory in nature should not be complicated by administrative duties, where necessity or considerations of public expediency do not appear.

4. The Board believes that supervision should be assumed by the State government over all wayfarers' lodges and cheap lodging houses. Because this is a problem not separable in treatment from vagrancy, outdoor poor relief, and drunkenness, the duty of such supervision should fall in the department of Charity.

5. An amendment to chapter 181 of the Acts of 1910, rendering the Board's approval requisite to the incorporation of private charities. Under this statute, the Board is required to investigate all petitions for the incorporation of private charities, to give public hearings and to report its findings to the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The operation of this law, in connection with chapter 402 of the Acts of 1903, requiring annual reporting by all charities, and chapter 379 of the Acts of 1909 providing annual inspection of incorporated charitable agencies, is demonstrating beyond all question the wisdom of State supervision of incorporated charitable agencies. Though this policy is of recent date, the incorporated charities of the entire Commonwealth have come to look upon State supervision as a help in the development of right standards of relief. The Board believes that the time has come when its special knowledge in the field of private

charities should be brought to bear upon all new petitions for the incorporation of charities by rendering its approval requisite to the issuance of a charter.

6. In its supervision of the field of relief, public and private, the Board makes a study of all agencies and sources for philanthropic effort. In this study it is necessary to ascertain the various charitable trusts, and special funds created by will; but no means exist by which the fact of such trusts and bequests may be obtained, except the long and costly method of searching local records. The Board therefore requests legislation providing for notice from registers of probate and of deeds, when wills or deeds are filed containing charitable bequests, trusts or foundations.

7. In order to carry on its duties with the highest degree of efficiency and expediency, the Board requests legislation providing for certain special district police officers, to serve the Board in its execution of chapter 456 of the Acts of 1911, and chapter 563 of the Acts of 1913. These officers would be in every way analogous to police officers already authorized for certain purposes in the Board's work, and would involve no additional expense to the Commonwealth.

8. Because of necessary increase in the number of the Board's agents to whom cash is advanced by the Board's disbursing officer, to cover their expenses, the amount of such advance money allowed to be held at one time by the said disbursing officer under the law, has again become inadequate, unless expense accounts are to be rendered by agents every few days, causing much unnecessary expenditure of labor not only in this department, but in the department of the auditor of the Commonwealth. To relieve this situation, the Board requests an amendment to chapter six of the Revised Laws, increasing the amount of advance money which may be held by its disbursing officer at any one time, and also increasing his bond in proportion.

9. Experience in the administration of Penikese Hospital fully demonstrates the need of specially adapted facilities for the care and treatment of lepers. It is essential that the enforcement of cleanliness with regularity of treatment be brought about without unduly exposing the staff of officers

whose duty it is to bathe these patients, treat them and bind up their wounds. The Board therefore asks for a one-story structure containing bathing facilities, dispensary and space for X-ray apparatus, with adjoining wings for bed cases. The outside estimate for this structure equipped and furnished is \$40,000.

Very respectfully,

ROBERT W. KELSO,  
*Secretary.*

